

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 76 and 88 as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-72. (canceled)

73. (previously presented) A television messaging gateway for handling messages, said gateway being adapted to operate in conjunction with a television distribution system having a central location connected to a video downstream network constructed to carry video signals and distribute said signals to a plurality of terminals connected thereto, wherein at least one of said terminals is constructed to selectively display said video signal on a television screen, and an upstream network capable of delivering user input signals from a remote location to said central location, said television messaging gateway adapted for operating in conjunction with a messaging server constructed to store and forward messages, said television messaging gateway comprising:

a message control interface adapted to couple to said messaging server for controlling at least one message therein, said message having address information associated therewith, to associate said message with at least one user,

a video output module for generating video frame signals corresponding to said message or a portion thereof, said module is being adapted to couple to the downstream network for outputting said video frame signals on a television coupled to an addressable terminal;

an input device interface adapted to connect to said upstream network for receiving user input signals inputted using a telephone;

logic for directing said message between said message control interface and said video output module.

74. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway as claim 73 wherein said television messaging gateway further comprises storage means to store a plurality of messages and the addressing information associated therewith.

75. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73 wherein said input device interface is further constructed to receive user input signals which are inputted using a telephone keypad, a user voice, or a combination thereof.

76. (currently amended) The television-messaging gateway of claim 73 wherein said messaging server is a unified messaging server, and wherein at least one of ~~said~~ selected messages comprises either a fax ~~messages~~, message or a voice mail ~~messages~~ message.

77. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73 further comprising receiver means to receive user generated messages.

78. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73, wherein said upstream network is selected from a group comprising a telephony network, a bi-directional television distribution network, a wireless network, a dedicated wire network or a combination thereof.

79. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73 wherein said user input signals are selected from a group consisting of telephony input, touch tone signals input, voice input, or a combination thereof.

80. (previously presented). The television messaging gateway of claim 73 wherein said upstream network is a bi-directional television distribution network and wherein said terminal is adapted to send said user input signals to said television messaging gateway via said upstream network.

81. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73 wherein said input device interface further comprises a speech recognition capability and wherein said user input signals comprise voice signals.

82. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73, wherein said terminal is adapted to receive user voice input, and transmit said voice input to said input device interface.

83. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73, further adapted to be coupled to an IP based network for receiving messages and user input therethrough.

84. (cancelled)

85. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73, wherein said television messaging gateway further comprises a local module and a centralized module, and wherein said local module or a portion thereof is located at the user premises.

86. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway as in claim 73 further constructed to receive user input signals, and to use said signals to identify and select a terminal to direct messages to.

87. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway as in claim 73 further comprising means for notification of receipt of a message.

88. (currently amended) The television messaging gateway of claim 73 wherein said messages are of a type selected from voice mail messages, video mail messages, and fax ~~messages~~ messages.

89. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73 wherein said downstream network is a cable television network, a satellite television network, a terrestrial video distribution network, a radio frequency video distribution network, a DSL network, a cellular network, a hybrid network, direct cable connection, or a combination thereof.

90. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73 wherein said video frame signals comprise digital video signals and wherein said downstream network is constructed to transmit digital video signals and addressing information to address selected signals to a selected terminal.

91. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 73, further comprising a voice recorder to record user voice, and further constructed to embed at least a portion of said recorded voice within an outgoing message.

92. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway, of claim 73 further adapted to generate signals that will cause a progress bar to display on said television screen a progress bar indicating relative progress of an audio or video message being delivered to said terminal.

93. (previously presented) A television messaging gateway for handling messages, said gateway being adapted to operate in conjunction with a television distribution system having a downstream network constructed to carry signals and distribute said signals to a plurality of terminals connected thereto, wherein at least one of said terminals is constructed to selectively display an image corresponding to said signal on a television screen, operating in conjunction with an upstream network constructed to deliver user input signals, and further operating in conjunction with a messaging server, said television messaging gateway comprising:

an input device interface being adapted to couple to said upstream network for receiving input signals;

a message control interface responsive to said input signals, for controlling at least one message having address information associated therewith, to associate said message with at least one user;

an output module, adapted to generating video frame signals corresponding to said message, the module further being adapted to couple to said downstream network, and constructed to deliver said signal to a terminal corresponding to said address information, for display on a television set coupled thereto; wherein said message control interface is constructed to control said message responsive to user input signals entered via a telephone.

94. (previously presented) The television-messaging gateway of claim 93 wherein said messaging server is a unified messaging server.

95. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 94, wherein said upstream network is selected from a group comprising a telephony network, a bi-directional television distribution network, a wireless network, a dedicated wire network or a combination thereof.

96. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 94, wherein said television messaging gateway further comprises a local module and a centralized module, and wherein said local module or a portion thereof is located at the user premises.

97. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 94 wherein said upstream network comprises a bi-directional television distribution network and wherein said terminal is adapted to send user input signals to said television messaging gateway via said upstream network.

98. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 94, further adapted to be coupled to an IP based network for receiving messages and user input therethrough.

99. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 93 wherein said input device interface further comprises a speech recognition capability and wherein said user input signals comprise voice signals.

100. (previously presented) The television messaging gateway of claim 93, further comprising a voice recorder module to record user voice, and further constructed to embed at least a portion of said recorded voice within an outgoing message.

101-106. (canceled)

107. (previously presented) A method for handling messages comprising the steps of:  
    using a telephone, inputting commands to a television messaging gateway, to select at least one message directed to a user;  
    causing said television messaging gateway to output messages in response to said commands, for outputting said message via a television distribution system on a television set associated with said user, wherein said television being coupled directly or indirectly to said messaging gateway.

108. (previously presented) The method of claim 107 further comprising the steps of:  
    Recording a voice message;  
    Automatically packing said voice message into an e-mail message; and,  
    Sending said e-mail message.

109. (previously presented) The method of claim 108 further comprising the step of inputting said voice message via said telephone.

110. (previously presented) The method according to claim 107, wherein said messaging server is a unified messaging server.

111. (canceled).

112. (previously presented) A computer readable media containing software that when executed by a computer will cause said computer to substantially perform the method steps performed by the television messaging gateway of claim 107.

113-128. (cancelled)

129 (previously presented) A system for handling messages adapted to operate in conjunction with a television distribution system having a downstream network constructed to carry signals and selectively distribute said signals to a plurality of terminals connected thereto, wherein at least one of said terminals is constructed to selectively display an image corresponding to said signal on a television screen,

operating in conjunction with an upstream network constructed to deliver user input signals to a central location, the system comprising:

a distributed television messaging gateway, having a message control interface for selecting at least one message from a unified messaging server, said message having address information associated therewith, to associate said message with at least one user;

wherein said message control interface is constructed to select said message responsive to user input signals entered via a telephone, and said system adapted to feed a video frame signal corresponding to said message into said downstream network;

wherein said video frame signal is directed to at least one of said terminals, for display on a television set coupled thereto.

130. (previously presented) The system at claim 129 wherein said television messaging gateway is implemented in part at a central location and in part in the user premises.

131. (previously presented) The system of claim 129 further comprising a voice recorder to record user voice, and wherein said system is further constructed to embed at least a portion of said recorded voice within an outgoing message.

132-134. (canceled)